

## REMARKS

Applicant appreciates and thank the Examiner for the careful consideration and favorable treatment of claims 1-12, 14 and 16-30, which have been indicated as being allowed.

Claim 13 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Braat in view of Foo.

Applicant respectfully submits that the analogy between the invention of Braat and claim 13 of the present invention is based on a hind-sighted view and more specifically, Applicant respectfully submits that it is technically incorrect to equate the reflective mask located in the object plane 1 according to Braat with the first mirror M1 according to claim 13. Braat discloses that “the beam  $b_1$  reflected by the reflective mask is incident on the first mirror 5 of the system...” (column 4, lines 4-7). This clearly indicates that mirror 5 and *not* the mask of Braat corresponds to the first mirror M1 according to claim 13 of the present application. As a consequence, a comparison between Braat and claim 13 has to be based on this correlation.

Furthermore, the present application also discloses an object plane with a mask (planes Ob and Ob' in figures 1 and 2, respectively). In analogy to Braat, the object plane is located before the first mirror. Therefore, a person skilled in the art will clearly identify the correlation between the object plane with the mask according to Braat and the object plane with the mask according to the present invention. The person skilled in the art will equate the object planes and the masks with each other. However, the person skilled in the art will not equate the mask of Braat with the claimed first mirror M1 of the present invention.

In addition, treating the mask in the object plane of Braat as the first mirror of the projection objective would result in a projection objective having seven mirrors. However, claim 13 specifically recites that the projection objective includes an even number of mirrors. As a consequence of the approach of the Examiner, this feature of claim 13 would not be disclosed by Braat. It is not correct to define the mask as the first mirror when discussing the arrangement of the

mirrors and at the same time, to define the mirror 5 as the first mirror when discussing the total number of mirrors.


Furthermore, Applicant respectfully contends that a person skilled in the art would not improve the invention of Braat according to the disclosure of Foo. Braat is relating to a projection system for EUV-radiation. However, the lenses of the second optical group according to Foo are not transparent for EUV-radiation. As a consequence, the lens arrangement disclosed by Foo is not suitable to correct aberrations of the EUV-radiation which are generated by the mirrors of the system disclosed by Braat.

Based on the foregoing, Applicant respectfully submits that claim 13 of the present application is based on an inventive step. Reconsideration and allowance of claim 13 are respectfully requested.

Applicant has added new claim 31 which includes the subject matter of pending claim 13 and includes the limitation that all of the mirrors are coaxial. Claim 31 should be allowed for the same reasons why claim 13 should be allowed as discussed above and further for the limitation that all mirrors are coaxial. Since the features of claim 31 are neither disclosed nor suggested by Braat, new claim 31 should be allowed.

Applicant has added new claim 32 which includes the subject matter of pending claim 13 and includes the limitation that at least one lens is arranged in the optical path between the first mirror and the last mirror. Claim 32 should be allowed for the same reasons why claim 13 should be allowed as discussed above and further for the limitation that all mirrors are coaxial. Since the features of claim 32 are neither disclosed nor suggested by Braat, new claim 32 should be allowed.

Claims 1-12, 14 and 16-30 stand allowed.

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In view of the above amendment, applicant believes the pending application is in condition for allowance.

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Respectfully submitted,

By 

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